

Proverbs 18:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

Analysis

This proverb provides penetrating psychological insight into wealth's deceptive power. 'Strong city' and 'high wall' evoke images of security and invincibility—yet the critical phrase is 'in his own conceit' (תִּבְמַשְׂקִיתוֹ/bemaskito, in his imagination). Wealth provides false security. The rich man imagines protection that doesn't exist. Jesus echoed this warning in the parable of the rich fool who said, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years' (Luke 12:19)—yet that very night his soul was required of him. Proverbs repeatedly warns against trusting in riches (11:28; 23:5). True security comes only from God: 'The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe' (Proverbs 18:10, immediately preceding this verse). The juxtaposition is deliberate—contrasting genuine refuge (the LORD) with imagined refuge (wealth). Paul commands the rich 'not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God' (1 Timothy 6:17).

Historical Context

Ancient cities depended on walls for defense against invaders. Jerusalem's walls, rebuilt by Nehemiah, symbolized security and prosperity. Wealth enabled individuals to build fortified houses, hire guards, and stockpile supplies. However, history repeatedly demonstrated that walls couldn't save apart from God's protection. Despite fortifications, Jerusalem fell to Babylon (586 BC) and later to Rome (AD 70). Conversely, God could protect without walls—as when He delivered Hezekiah from Sennacherib's vast army (2 Kings 19:35). Solomon himself accumulated unprecedented wealth (1 Kings 10:14-29), yet his son Rehoboam lost

most of the kingdom—proving that wealth couldn't preserve what God didn't bless (1 Kings 12).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What 'walls' do you trust in for security besides God—savings, insurance, career stability, health?
2. How can you hold wealth as a steward rather than idolizing it as ultimate security?
3. What would it look like practically to make God your 'strong tower' rather than material resources?

Interlinear Text

ה וֶן	עַ שִׁיר	קִרְיַת	עֲזֵו	וְכֹחֹמָה	נִשְׁגָּבָה
wealth	The rich man's	city	is his strong	wall	and as an high
H1952	H6223	H7151	H5797	H2346	H7682

בְּמִשְׁכָּתוֹ:

in his own conceit
H4906

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 10:15 (Parallel theme): The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.

Ecclesiastes 7:12 (Parallel theme): For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

Deuteronomy 32:31 (Parallel theme): For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.

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